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**SUPPORTING FUTURE U.S. ALLIANCE
STRATEGY: THE ANGLO-SAXON,
OR "ABCA" CLUE**

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U.S. ALLIANCE STRATEGY:
THE ANGLO-SAXON,
OR "ABCA" CLUE**

by

Thomas-Durell Young

1 June 1990

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FOREWORD

This report, initiated by the Strategic Studies Institute, analyzes the little-known, but extensive defense cooperative relationship which exists among the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. While perhaps arguably a relatively esoteric subject prior to 1989, given the recent changes which have taken place in the Soviet Union, U.S. alliance strategy is now on the threshold of a new era; an era where the Soviet threat is seen by many allies as diminishing. As U.S. officials ponder the implications of a decreased Soviet threat on its many alliances, of which almost all have been threat-based, it will be important to recall the one series of collective security arrangements with allies which has been founded on similarities, vice solely threat. This intimate Anglo-Saxon "connection," described and analyzed in this report, appears to have the needed bases for enduring well into the post-cold war era.

The author, Dr. Thomas-Durell Young, would like to express his appreciation for assistance provided by Dr. Gary Guertner, Colonel John Hickey, and Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Johnson, of the Strategic Studies Institute; and the many officials of the ABCA fora who greatly aided him in his research over the years.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this report as a contribution to the field of national security studies.



KARL W. ROBINSON
Colonel, U.S. Army
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

THOMAS-DURELL YOUNG has been a National Security Affairs Analyst at the Strategic Studies Institute since 1983. Prior to this appointment, he was a country risk analyst for BERI, S.A., a Swiss-based consulting firm. Dr. Young received his Ph.D. from the Graduate Institute of International Studies, University of Geneva, Switzerland; his M.A. from the School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University; and will be a graduate of the U.S. Army War College in July 1990. He has published extensively on U.S. alliance issues with particular emphasis on Western Europe and the Southwest Pacific. His publications have appeared in such journals as *Comparative Strategy*, *Conflict*, *Asian Survey*, *Defense Analysis*, *Armed Forces and Society*, *Naval War College Review*, *Parameters*, *International Defense Review*, and *Proceedings*. He is currently completing a book critiquing Australian defense policy.

SUPPORTING FUTURE U.S. ALLIANCE STRATEGY: THE ANGLO-SAXON, OR "ABCA" CLUE

OVERVIEW

Men are not tied to one another by papers and seals. They are led to associate by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies. Nothing is so strong a tie of amity between nations as correspondence in laws, customs, manners and habits of life. They have more than the force of treaties in themselves. They are obligations from the heart.

Edmund Burke¹

As the post-cold-war era continues its rapid evolution, it is becoming increasingly evident that the basic character of U.S. alliances is changing. The previous basis for U.S. participation in classical threat-oriented alliances perforce will change as the Soviet threat, particularly in Europe, diminishes. This is not to say, however, that alliances will not remain an essential element of U.S. security in this new era of superpower detente. Given the vicissitudes of international relations, future American strategy assuredly will continue to be based on participation in collective security arrangements, irrespective of the extent of superpower detente. For, if the study of history has any clear lesson to be learned in this regard, it is that whenever an international system based largely upon bipolarity undergoes a metamorphosis toward multipolarity, for whatever reason, conditions for conflict increase proportionately. This is only intuitive; given an increase in the number of unaligned states, the likelihood for conflict also increases. In view of this harsh assessment of the future world security order, strong rationales for continued participation in collective security arrangements will remain, albeit for altered missions. In view of the massive changes which are presently taking place in the international security system and their implications for U.S. alliances, it is instructive to assess what

are the types of enduring alliances which will be important to U.S. security in the years to come. This should not be seen as mere intellectual speculation. Most postwar U.S. alliances have been created as a direct response to the Soviet global threat, which is now disappearing, to Western values. Indeed, in classical alliance theory, as recently reiterated by Steven Walt, alliances are formed as "expedient responses to external threats."² In consequence, without the immediacy of the longstanding Soviet threat, it can be predicted that the number of countries wishing to remain in close peacetime alignment with the United States will diminish over time. Thus, the key question arises, what type of state is likely to remain strongly aligned with the United States in this new international security order?

An Alliance by National Similarities.

If we return to the topic of alliance theory, there is a school of thought, as immortalized in the above quotation by Burke, which holds that alliances are formed as the result of shared traits between states. Morgenthau described this type of alliance formation as "ideological solidarity," which, while relatively rare among alliances, does have historical precedent.³ Such an "alliance" in which the United States has participated is the little-known allied ties the United States has maintained since the end of the Second World War with Britain, Canada, Australia and, to some extent until 1985, with New Zealand. These particular relationships are often ignored since many view U.S. security ties with Britain and Canada in terms of NATO, and with Australia and New Zealand as a function of the ANZUS Treaty. Yet, remarkably, a large proportion of security relations between the United States and these countries are actually conducted on a bilateral basis. Of contemporary relevance, the security relationship the United States has developed with these countries since the end of the Second World War provides one possible guide to the future type of alliances the United States can expect will endure. Unlike other peacetime security relationships the United States entered into since 1945, the prime motivation behind the

continuation of these security ties has arguably been the existence of national similarities, as opposed to total consensus in threat perceptions.

In addition to the observation that these "special" security relationships between the United States and its "Anglo-Saxon" allies are likely to remain intact into the post-cold-war era, there is another important mitigating factor that will increase their importance, but differently than in the past. It is already clear that the Soviet Union under President Gorbachev has achieved major diplomatic gains through the abandonment of his predecessors' policies of diplomatic and military confrontation. Indeed, through the use of creative diplomatic maneuvering, since 1985 Moscow has been very successful in attaining its national objectives through diplomatic means. Given the evident high level of Soviet sophistication in this area, taken in conjunction with the gradual weakening of the East-West blocs, it is clear that America will increasingly be faced with a competitive world characterized by a heightened, important role played by adept diplomatic maneuvering.

Thus, in this new international order, allies which share with the United States a common culture, historical experience and language, will be valuable, as well as too few. In light of these evolutionary trends on the international plane, it would appear logical that the United States will increase its diplomatic exchange with these states, given their shared interests and objectives. Fortunately for the United States, it will not be necessary to effect a new body of allied security ties, since there already exists an extensive array of defense cooperative programs between these five countries.

The Beginnings of Anglo-Saxon Security Cooperation.

The particular field of Anglo-American security cooperation that developed during the postwar era has been well-researched and documented by scholars and analysts on both sides of the Atlantic.⁴ From its modest beginnings

following the end of the Second World War until today, defense cooperation between these two countries has blossomed and extended to include many security-sensitive areas including nuclear weapon and submarine nuclear-propulsion research and development. The British campaign to regain possession of the Falkland Islands in 1982 is an example of the close relationship between the defense bureaucracies of these two countries. One source claimed that the U.S. Department of Defense actually began to assist the U.K. Ministry of Defence *prior* to the announcement of official U.S. diplomatic support for Britain due to the existence of a multitude of bilateral cooperative agreements between the two bureaucracies and armed services.⁵

Following the end of the Second World War, the three "Old Dominions" of the British Empire Commonwealth (Canada, Australia and New Zealand) also entered into peacetime security arrangements with the United States. For Canada, this took the form of the establishment of the Military Cooperation Committee in 1946, whose legal and political basis was established by the 1940 Ogdenshurg agreement declared by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King. Ottawa and Washington expanded their mutual security commitments when each became signatories to the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949.⁶ Australia and New Zealand, by virtue of the ANZUS Security Treaty with the United States, signed in 1951, gained official allied status in the eyes of Washington. This was reinforced by the 1954 Manila Treaty which established the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization.⁷

While the above description of peacetime security arrangements between these five Anglo-Saxon countries is well known and has been the subject of extensive study and analysis, what is less understood in the defense establishment, and which is of future relevance to U.S. alliance strategy, is the existence of numerous defense cooperation arrangements which continue to tie together all *five* countries' armed forces. These specific agreements and programs all exist at the armed service level and therefore, according to traditional treaty law,

do not formally bind the governments of these five countries in any way. Nevertheless, the implications of these programs, known generically as the "ABCA" fora, have had a strong influence on the material standardization and interoperability capabilities of these five defense forces, if not on their actual materiel standardization objectives. The titles of these programs/arrangements are: the ABCA Armies Standardization Program, the Air Standardization Coordinating Committee, the ABCA Navies Quadripartite Standardization Program, the AUSCANZUKUS Naval Communications Organization, the Combined Exercise Agreement, the Combined Communications Electronics Board, and The Technical Cooperation Committee.

The implications of these programs for their participants have been significant apropos developing the capability to conduct joint military operations. At the military level, these programs have provided the basis for continuing peacetime cooperation between the five countries' armed services in the areas of combined operations, mutual logistic support, and coordination of defense scientific research. It is interesting to note, in passing, that many of the ABCA standardization efforts actually *preceded* the creation of NATO and continue to operate outside of that organization, although there has been a long record of information exchange between them and NATO.³ Furthermore, the informal working relationship that has typified the ABCA programs has had the advantage of facilitating standardization and interoperability in a manner not possible to date within NATO. As an example of the degree to which information is routinely exchanged between the members of this "exclusive" club, practically all the charters of these programs provide for the exchange of information between the members up to and including the *secret* level. In the particular case of Australia and New Zealand, these fora have been of particular value since they have allowed both countries, in spite of their geographic isolation, to maintain close contact with the latest developments in Western military technology, tactics and doctrine.

Cooperation Continues Today.

On the political plane, the continued existence and expansion in scope of these programs, long after they have ceased to function for the purpose for which they were originally planned (i.e., equipment standardization in the strictest sense), signifies a strong political cohesion. A commonality in broad security interests and objectives continues to be shared by these five countries with their predominantly Anglo-Saxon peoples and similar governing institutions (manifested during this century by being thrice allied against totalitarianism, i.e., World War I, World War II and the Korean War), despite occasional (and serious in the case of the United States and New Zealand) diplomatic disagreements, in addition to a growing divergence in geographical defense orientations. An excellent example of the underlying political alignment between these similar countries is the fact that the New Zealand Defence Forces have retained membership in the ABCA fora following the break in bilateral U.S.-New Zealand security ties in 1985 over the issue of port access for U.S. warships. The maintenance of the ABCA link has obviated Wellington's isolation in defense matters stemming from its antinuclear policies, which is clearly in the Western alliance's best interest.

The objective of this report is to describe and analyze the ABCA standardization, interoperability and defense science cooperative programs which tie together the defense forces of Britain, the United States and the "old Dominions" and relate their importance to future U.S. security interests. It will be shown that these programs have been beneficial to their members, albeit differently, and that a degree of mutual dependence upon the other members has developed through specialization. A review of the extent of the activities of these programs lends strong support to Edmund Burke's observation that men and nations are not bound by papers and seals, but are led to associate "by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies." Anglo-Saxon defense cooperation, therefore, can be argued to manifest a distinct (and exclusive) alliance

within the Western alliance and one that will surely endure long into the post-cold war era.

ABCA PROGRAMS

The Development of ABCA Programs.

The genesis of the ABCA standardization programs can be traced to the very early postwar years when Washington, London and Ottawa were becoming increasingly anxious about the worsening relationship between the Western democracies and their former wartime ally, the Soviet Union. Senior military leaders from the United States, Britain and Canada, drawing on their experience from both world wars, fully appreciated the difficulty of attaining the capability to conduct successful coalition warfare. Given the increasingly bellicose behavior of the Soviet Union in world affairs, it was logical for these former allies to attempt to retain a high degree of interoperability among their respective defense forces.¹⁰ Their foresight was vindicated in 1950 when these three allies found themselves once again (with Australia and New Zealand) fighting alongside each other in Korea.

Specifically, in 1946, the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, during a visit to North America recommended that the United States, Britain and Canada should "cooperate closely in all defense matters; discussions should deal not only with standardization, but should cover the whole field of cooperation and combined action in the event of war."¹¹ By late 1946, press reports from London stated that these three countries were considering the feasibility of standardizing the weapons, tactics, and training of their armed forces.¹² Indeed, in 1947 a standardization agreement between the armies of the three countries was signed, followed by a similar accord effected between their respective air forces in 1948. Of importance to future standardization efforts was the agreement reached in November 1948 under which a standard thread pattern was adopted for all nuts and bolts, the "Unified American-British-Canadian Screw Thread."¹³ Impetus was

given to this inter-allied standardization movement through a directive issued by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in July 1949 to the U.S. Armed Services to initiate standardization programs with their British and Canadian counterparts.¹⁴ From this modest beginning, the ABCA standardization programs have expanded to include almost all areas of defense activity, notwithstanding the evident failure of many of them to succeed in accomplishing the formal standardization of weapon systems between themselves. Rather, where these programs have had an important influence has been in the area of achieving and maintaining interoperability between their armed services.

ABCA Armies.

The ABCA Armies Standardization Program, the earliest of these ABCA arrangements, was initially established with the signing of the agreement, "Plan to Effect Standardization," in 1947 between the American, British and Canadian armies. The aim of this particular agreement was to ensure that there should be no doctrinal or materiel obstacles to complete cooperation between these three armies in time of conflict. This accord was replaced by the "Basic Standardization Agreement" in 1954 between the three armies.¹⁵ Following the deployment of Commonwealth forces from Australia, New Zealand and Britain to Malaysia during the period of confrontation with Indonesia, it was decided to invite the Australian Army to join the ABC armies' forum in 1963. Australia accepted this invitation to join the arrangement on January 18, 1963,¹⁶ and the Basic Standardization Agreement became the ABCA Armies Program in 1964. New Zealand subsequently gained associate membership through Australia's sponsorship in 1965.¹⁷ Although the New Zealand Army has long declined to accept full membership status in this program (due to financial considerations), its representatives attend ABCA Armies' meetings as observers, exchange standardization representatives and even host ABCA meetings in New Zealand.¹⁸ Both the Australian and New Zealand armies' decision to join this allied standardization

forum proved to be timely, because both subsequently deployed forces to Vietnam alongside the U.S. Army in 1964.

As they now stand, the stated objectives of the ABCA Armies program are to achieve not only,

the fullest cooperation and collaboration but also the highest possible degree of interoperability through both material and non-material standardization, and also to obtain the greatest possible economy by the use of combined resources and effort.¹⁹

"Material standardization" under this arrangement is not defined as including the strict standardization of weapon systems themselves. The ABC and ABCA Armies' programs are replete with examples of these armies' inability (or unwillingness) to come to agreement concerning the joint acquisition of equipment, even in the most basic areas. For example, American and British officials attempted without success in the early 1950s to adopt a common rifle for their armies; a singular lack of standardization in such a basic weapon that continues to today.²⁰ Additionally, during the 1960s, the American, British, Canadian and Australian armies entered into a cooperative agreement for the research, development and production of a secure tactical trunk communications system called "Project Mallard" with interoperability between the four armies as one of the system's primary objectives. While a considerable amount of advanced R&D was carried out on this project, it ultimately failed to reach the production stage due to cost overruns.²¹ Hence, because of the political sensitivity of material standardization, which requires purchases of foreign systems or at least their plans if they are to be manufactured domestically under license, from the late 1960s onward, the ABCA Armies Program has redirected its efforts to the area of doctrinal and procedural standardization (which was, interestingly enough, the initial objective of the 1947 "Plan to Effect Standardization").²²

One publication²³ on the ABCA Armies Program lists its many advantages to its members and methods by which standardization is achieved under the program:

- Standardization Lists. The Standardization Lists contain a listing of the ABCA Armies R&D projects which are of interest to two or more Armies...
- Cooperative R&D. The ABCA Program provides an Army with the means of matching requirements with other Armies...
- Loans of Equipment. The Program provides an Army with the opportunity to borrow equipment from other Armies for its own test and evaluation if the loan is in the interest of standardization. When appropriate, these items can be tested to destruction. Loans are generally at *no cost to the borrowing Army*...(emphasis added).
- Defence Sales...sure method of achieving standardization.
- Quadripartite Standardization Agreements (QSTAGs). Armies may participate in formal agreements on common equipments and procedures, called QSTAGs. QSTAGs record the degree of standardization achieved and to be maintained for any item of equipment and agreement to standardize on operational, logistic, administration, and technical procedures. When applicable, QSTAGs are offered to national Air Forces and Navies, who may also accept them as a binding agreement...
- Quadripartite Advisory Publications (QAP). There are several specialized functional or technical areas within the ABCA Program in which the standardization of procedures and processes for materiel and non-materiel items are not possible. When the identification of these national procedures can be an aid to mutual understanding, they can be published as QAPs.

- Exchange of Ideas. The Program provides a continuing exchange of ideas, and thoughts among the scientists, developers and army staffs.

The method by which information is exchanged under the ABCA Armies Program includes correspondence, Quadripartite Working Groups (which cover functional military specialties, e.g., infantry, artillery, air defence, etc.), Special Working Parties, Information Exchange Groups, and the exchange of Standardization Representatives located in each of the member countries.²⁴ The international management board, which oversees the activities of this program is provided by the Washington Standardization Officers who are senior military officers stationed in Washington, D.C. A permanent staff of lieutenant colonels nominated by each of the four members makes up the small secretariat in suburban Washington. Moreover, every 18 months there is a general meeting of Army officials at the Vice Chief of Staff/Deputy Chief of Staff level of all five partners for the purpose of providing direction and establishing guidelines for future standardization efforts called, in keeping the program's "anatidae" obsession, "TEAL."²⁵

This particular program has also attempted to achieve some degree of coordination in the creation of force development policies of the five armies through its "Armies Combat Development Guide." This classified publication is continuously updated and reissued every 5 years. The document assesses the outlook for global security for the West and identifies the likely combat requirements of its members over the next 10 years. From this publication, "Quadripartite Objectives" are developed which in turn provide direction to the numerous ABCA Army Quadripartite Working Groups in their efforts to formulate "Quadripartite Working Group Concept Papers".²⁶ Derivative from these studies are national "Army Objective/Requirements Documents" which are regularly circulated to other armies for comment.²⁷ From these coordinating efforts, the five armies are able to formulate their own objectives and envision mid-term military capabilities at

the conceptual stage of development in conjunction with their allies.²⁸

Finally, despite the fact that the ABCA Armies Program is not a formal treaty organization (and as such does not, for instance, conduct contingency planning), it was decided in the mid-1980s that to review the process of the program, the American, British, Canadian, and Australian armies needed to conduct a series of combined exercises. Specifically, these exercises were to evaluate interoperability, determine shortcomings and to validate and assess existing QSTAGS (which to date number approximately 900).²⁹ A command post exercise, CPX CALTROP TYRO, was held at Fort Ord, California, in November 1987. Following that, for the first time since the end of the Korean War, units from these four armies, comprising 5,500 troops (constituting four maneuver battalions with support units), participated in a brigade-level field training exercise, FTX CALTROP FORCE, at Fort Hunter-Liggett, California, between March 15 and April 1, 1989. The latter exercise, incidentally, was the largest ever held in the United States involving these four armies, and it identified a number of interoperability shortcomings.³⁰

Clearly, the cooperative mechanism established by the ABCA Armies Program for the exchange of interoperability data is extensive. This program has special attractions in particular for the armies of Australia, New Zealand and the United States because it has directed most of its attention in recent years to land warfare in low- and mid-intensity range. This has been the result of a deliberate policy decision by the ABCA Armies to complement, vice duplicate, the efforts of NATO, which has been oriented toward developing doctrine and tactics for higher levels of warfare. Hence, through this "specialization" in interoperability and standardization by the ABCA Armies in areas of low- to mid-intensity conflict, the entire spectrum of warfare has been addressed by the Western alliance.³¹

Air Standardization Coordinating Committee (ASCC).

The standardization process between the air forces of the five Anglo-Saxon countries (to include the membership of the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy) is the Air Standardization Coordinating Committee (ASCC). The ASCC was formed by the air forces of the United States, Britain and Canada in January 1948. The RAAF and RNZAF joined the ASCC as full members in 1964 and 1965 respectively. Membership in the committee comprises officers of general rank who meet annually to resolve any outstanding policy issues and to approve the annual report of the ASCC Management Committee, which is located at U.S. Air Force Headquarters at the Pentagon in Washington, DC.³²

The objectives of the ASCC are to ensure a minimum of obstacles to operational cooperation among its members, to enable cross-servicing of aircraft, to conduct justifiable logistic support, and generally to promote a rationalization of resources.³³ The members of the committee are also signatories to the "Master Agreement for the Exchange of Equipment for Test Purposes" which provides for the loan of equipment for testing and evaluation purposes by the ASCC members at no cost, and often at short notice.³⁴ ASCC standardization objectives are normally reached by the negotiation of Air Standards between the five air forces, of which there are now approximately 300, in addition to at least 60 ASCC Advisory Publications. The process by which Air Standards are reached (which must be approved by unanimous agreement) includes:

- Exchange of information in approved areas.
- Adoption of standard or similar methods, procedures, tactics, techniques, equipment and terminology.
- Establishing the design of equipment for cross servicing of aircraft.³⁵

As in the case of the ABCA Armies Program, information eligible for exchange in the ASCC extends up to secret.³⁶ In the early 1980s, the ASCC members recognized that the continued lack of materiel standardization between themselves placed the program's future relevance in doubt. One of the recommendations of the 33rd Meeting of the ASCC Management Committee was to take a fresh look at the program with the aim of possibly lowering costs by reducing the number of projects and working groups under its sponsorship. The RAND Corporation, commissioned to study the problem, issued a report in 1982 which argued that the ASCC could revive much of the impetus of its early years by working toward "sufficient" standardization (i.e., interoperability), instead of standardization in the strictest sense of this term.³⁷ Subsequent to the release of this study, the number of engineer working groups was reduced and achieving interoperability is now the primary objective of the ASCC.

ABCA Navies.

The ABCA Navies have a number of agreements and arrangements which encourage interoperability. To a large extent, peacetime cooperation between these navies predate that of the ABCA Armies since the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy began exchanging classified information regarding Japan in July 1937.³⁸ Very close wartime cooperation was followed by cordial peacetime navy-to-navy relations which culminated in an extensive array of service-level operational agreements and arrangements. The ABCA Navies Quadripartite Standardization Program, established by the naval authorities of the United States, Britain and Canada in 1950, was then known as the Naval Tripartite Standardization Program.³⁹ The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) joined the program in November 1971 and its present name was adopted. The Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) is not a member of this agreement, although it does maintain observer status.

This arrangement (particularly the ABCA Navies Field Z Program) stresses material standardization in the construction, maintenance, and support of warships. Standardization between the parties is achieved through the negotiation of Standardization Agreements (NAVSTAGs) which are reached by unanimous consent in technical, material and operational areas. The parties to the ABCA Navies arrangements also belong to the Information Exchange Project which enables the exchange of technical data in areas of common interest, e.g., undersea and electronic warfare.⁴⁰ Where it is found that a NATO Standardization Agreement (STANAG) would be of benefit to the RAN, there are procedures whereby a similar ABCA NAVSTAG is established for the benefit of the RAN through the sponsorship of the Royal Navy. Thus the RAN has been able to maintain material compatibility with NATO, which will become increasingly important.⁴¹ As Australia progresses in its current ambitious naval building program, which includes six Type-471 Kockums diesel submarines (with an option for an additional two) and eight Meko 200 "ANZAC" patrol-frigates (plus two for the RNZN which has an option for two additional ships),⁴² the RAN's material standardization link to NATO, as provided by the Field Z program, will clearly increase in importance.

Operational procedures are addressed between the five navies in a quinquupartite agreement which governs naval and maritime exercises held in the Pacific and Indian Oceans between the five navies and their respective maritime air units. This agreement, the Combined Exercise Agreement (commonly known as "COMBEXAG"), was initially a bilateral agreement between the Commander, Far East Fleet, Royal Navy, and the Commander, U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet. The RAN informally began using the document in September 1964 and became a formal participant with the document's release in 1966. The Canadian Forces joined the agreement in 1978 and the RNZN also became a participant in COMBEXAG. To a large extent, the COMBEXAG merely formalized existing arrangements between the five navies in the area of operational procedures. The document itself is essentially a planning manual which ensures that the five navies and

associated maritime air contingents can conduct combined maritime operations in the greater Pacific region.⁴³

In the area of naval communications, the CAN-UK-US NAVCOMMS Board was created in 1960 to resolve signals incompatibilities between the British, Canadian and U.S. navies. Australia became a member of the Permanent Board in 1966 and New Zealand, which had associate status, became a full member in 1980. Following New Zealand's accession, the arrangement adopted its present nomenclature, the AUS-CAN-NZ-UK-US NAVCOMMS Organization (or simply the NAVCOMMS Organization).⁴⁴ The NAVCOMMS Organization is directed by a Committee which meets every November in Washington, a Technical Working Group (which meets twice a year), and a Permanent Steering Committee comprising the Washington naval attaches from Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and U.S. Navy delegates. The Permanent Steering Committee meets twice a month with the mission to standardize communications equipment procedures. In 1978, an AUS-CAN-NZ-UK-US Naval Command and Control Board was created to effect compatibility of command and control with communications among the five navies.⁴⁵ An official release of the NAVCOMMS Organization argues that the success of the program is clearly evident since firstly "the five Allied navies can, and do, communicate, *and thereby operate*, at sea" (emphasis added); and secondly, the organization has developed a methodology over the years which identifies potential impediments to communications interoperability at an early stage of development. Even if problems cannot be resolved, there are procedures whereby alternative solutions can be explored by the Board and its members.⁴⁶

Combined Communications Electronics Board (CCEB).

In the area of defense communications and electronics in general, the Combined Communications Electronics Board (CCEB), which includes the same five countries, is tasked with

coordinating common communications and electronics matters (particularly standardization issues) that are of mutual interest to two or more members. The board also coordinates communications and electronics issues with other ABCA standardization programs.⁴⁷ Although the CCEB's predecessor was established in July 1942, it was dissolved in 1949 and not formally reestablished on a peacetime basis until 1951. Its membership then consisted of the United States, Britain and Canada (with Australian and New Zealand participation when appropriate) and was then called the Joint Communications-Electronics Comr. .ee. Australia became a full member on December 18, 1969, and New Zealand on September 20, 1972, when its present name was adopted. The CCEB is also responsible for the publication of Allied Communications Publications and General Supplements thereto,⁴⁸ which are extensively used in NATO.

The Technical Cooperation Program (TTCP).

Finally, although not directly related to interoperability and standardization, there is The Technical Cooperation Program (TTCP). TTCP concerns itself with the defense science research and development endeavors of the five Anglo-Saxon countries. Given TTCP's close liaison with R&D developments in the ABCA standardization/interoperability fora, it complements the pursuit of these objectives. TTCP was one of the many by-products of the launch of the Soviet Sputnik satellite on October 4, 1957. Fearing a sense of scientific inferiority in the Western alliance, British Prime Minister Harold McMillan during a visit to Washington following the Sputnik launch issued a public declaration with President Dwight Eisenhower on October 25 stating both countries should pool their defense science information and coordinate future defense R&D projects in order to avoid needless and costly duplication.⁴⁹ The Government of Canada immediately endorsed this Declaration of Common Purpose, thereby forming the Tripartite Technical Cooperation Program. The program's nomenclature was changed to its current usage

when Australia joined in July 1965. New Zealand gained admission to the program in October 1970.⁵⁰

The primary intent of TTCP, as established by its Declaration of Common Purpose, is the recognition that no single member has the resources to conduct research in all areas of defense science by itself. In brief, the program provides to its members the means of acquainting themselves with the defense science activities of their counterparts. In providing this conduit of information exchange, each country is able to plan its activities in cognizance of the efforts of others. Given the ever-growing complexity of defense science and its technological application, the value of TTCP has grown.⁵¹

Under TTCP, there are two subcommittees, one of which is solely concerned with atomic-related defense R&D, of which Britain and the United States are members. The other is called the Non-Atomic Military Research and Development Subcommittee to which all five countries belong.⁵² TTCP, it should be stressed, is a "program" and is not a corporate body. Therefore, it does not have any resources or projects under its own direct sponsorship.⁵³ Rather, the program is headed by the respective heads of the defense science establishments of the five countries, administered by seconded representatives ("Washington Deputies"), and served by a small secretariat in Washington, DC. TTCP acts to facilitate "the definition and initiation of joint complementary research studies of defense problems of mutual concern..."⁵⁴ Their research studies can, in principle, cover the entire range of military-related R&D topics. As an illustration of the value of TTCP to the Australian defence science community in particular; in 1980, it was officially acknowledged that Australia was participating in 64 different technical areas through the program's auspices.⁵⁵

SECURITY AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Benefits of ABCA Participation.

It is evident, therefore, that since 1947 these five predominantly Anglo-Saxon countries have developed an

extensive array of arrangements and programs dedicated to achieving interoperability, if not "standardization" in the proper sense. Additionally, through the efforts of TTCP and the various R&D elements of the ABCA standardization/interoperability programs, there has been a conscious attempt to coordinate their defense science endeavors in order to rationalize resources. What is perhaps amazing about the growth and longevity of this series of arrangements is that they have survived and grown in scope beyond the initial rationale for their creation; an expected global conflict between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies.⁵⁶ In view of the relevance of the ABCA fora, it is instructive to reflect upon their current and future political implications for Western security and the five member states.

Concerning their political ramifications, the ABCA fora provide their members, and the Western alliance in general through liaison arrangements with NATO, an alternative means of producing standards and common operational procedures. Indeed, the link between NATO and ABCA extends back to the actual establishment of the NATO standardization programs when ABCA standards were adopted and used as the foundation for the initial efforts of the Military Agency for Standardization.⁵⁷ NATO and ABCA standardization programs continue to maintain liaison ties, and as seen in the case of the ABCA Navies, NATO STANAGs can be established as ABCA NAVSTAGs for the explicit benefit of the RAN.⁵⁸

Moreover, the less structured and informal method of conducting business in the ABCA fora also has had its advantages in reaching agreement in what is oftentimes a tedious negotiation process. According to one Canadian defense official, the principal advantages of the ABCA fora to Canada are that the

...exchange of information both scientific and operational is more easily and readily available in the less formal service-to-service atmosphere of the ABCA forum. Our participation in ABCA establishes a solid preconsensus [sic]...which enhances the chance of speeding up the standardization process in NATO and

the possibility of the ABCA position prevailing. Normally agreement in the small ABCA forum is quicker and finally, we gain a great deal from the exchange of weapons and equipment in pursuit of standardization.⁵⁹

The ABCA fora have also been able to make singular contributions to furthering standardization and interoperability in the Western alliance by focusing their efforts and attention to areas not addressed by NATO, e.g., low- and mid-intensity conflict by the ABCA Armies.⁶⁰ Moreover, through these fora, the oftentimes singular environmental conditions present in Australia and New Zealand are made available to their allies for the testing of equipment (e.g., severe low altitude turbulence in New Zealand and its effects on airframes' longevity).⁶¹ In adopting this approach, according to one source, there has been surprisingly little in the way of conflict between ABCA and NATO standardization missions.⁶² Thus, the results of the efforts of the ABCA programs have extended far beyond the boundaries of its five members.

As to the question of what is the contemporary value of these programs to the participating countries: for Britain, Canada and the United States, ABCA membership is obvious. By working within these programs, their respective defense forces are able to benefit from participation in standardization arrangements which enable them to address a wider range of levels of warfare than is currently dealt with in NATO. For Australia and New Zealand, ABCA takes on even greater significance. Membership in the ABCA programs with Britain, Canada and the United States has added an additional defense liaison mechanism with their traditional allies, as well as providing an "informal" information link to developments in NATO. This, and other ties to their Anglo-Saxon partners, have enabled the defense forces of Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, to maintain a high level of operational compatibility with NATO forces since NATO STANAGS are often employed in the development of ABCA standards.⁶³ While some might question the utility of such a capability, it should be remembered that Australia, and until recently New Zealand, have traditionally maintained strong political ties with NATO. For instance, in 1981, Australia gained observer status

in the North Atlantic Assembly and normally sends delegations to Assembly meetings every second year.⁶⁴ Moreover, there are publicly acknowledged contingency plans for the naval control of shipping in the Southwest Pacific among the maritime forces of the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand⁶⁵ which are also apparently tied to similar NATO arrangements.⁶⁶ Clearly, if this particularly Australian diplomatic alignment to the Western alliance is to include the capability to operate militarily alongside of the defense forces of NATO, a high degree of interoperability is essential.

Limitations of ABCA Programs.

At the same time, however, the ABCA programs have not been devoid of their own particular defense and political problems. As to the former, it is recognized that these programs have not been totally "successful" in attaining the standardization of weapon systems in the true sense. While militarily desirable in an alliance, the standardization of weaponry in a coalition of democracies is, as seen in NATO, politically not possible. Given this reality, the interoperability of weapon platforms and systems becomes essential, as recognized by the ABCA arrangements.

Politically, the ABCA arrangements are merely "informal" service-to-service cooperative programs and do not constitute an "alliance," and as such member countries do not conduct contingency planning for envisioned eventualities.⁶⁷ Therefore, following the recent move by the ABCA Armies to hold command post and field training exercises for the purpose of testing interoperability, there has been concern expressed that a public misconception might develop as to the possible political implications of these programs. This anxiety is not without foundation when one considers past, outright scurrilous accusations leveled at New Zealand's membership in these fora by some "peace researchers" in that country.⁶⁸ New Zealand's continued membership in these fora,⁶⁹ despite the discontinuation of bilateral U.S.-New Zealand defense ties in the wake of the implementation of Wellington's antinuclear

policies, is yet another recent politically delicate matter which these fora have had to address. Finally, the once free flow of technical information between the five countries has witnessed periods of restriction due to the fear by some members' governments over the possible loss of proprietary rights of state-of-the-art defense technology. The latter problem has not been an easy one to resolve and yet its resolution would appear essential if interoperability and standardization are to be furthered and if a wide appreciation of new weapon technology is to be disseminated among the defense forces of these five countries.

A Promising Future.

In spite of these challenges, the ABCA standardization and interoperability programs appear to have a promising future. The ABCA programs provide a cost effective means of achieving interoperability and standardization outside of the oftentimes cumbersome NATO framework. What is surprising is that the vitality of the ABCA Programs has grown since the 1940s in spite of a slow, but noticeably growing, divergence of security concerns and commitments among the five countries since the first establishment in 1947.⁷⁰ This suggests that similarities in culture, language and heritage can provide the basis for a lasting and intimate security relationship even after the initial security concerns, which played a large part in an alliance's creation, have diminished. This condition exists in the Australian-U.S. security alliance, as codified by the ANZUS alliance, and is also noticeable in the overarching global, Anglo-Saxon security arrangements in which it largely falls.⁷¹

Thus, to paraphrase Edmund Burke, this exclusive Anglo-Saxon alliance demonstrates that cultural "blood" is thicker than political "water." While it is justifiable to question whether the defense forces of these five countries will find themselves in a wartime alliance again during the uncertain post-cold war era (as they have been three times during this century), there apparently is little doubt as to their ability to cooperate effectively and avoid the bloody practice of

relearning the difficult means of conducting coalition warfare on the battlefield.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- U.S. Defense officials should pay greater attention to the possibilities for increased defense cooperation with its ABCA partners. As the international landscape continues to change dramatically, there will be increased opportunities for greater defense cooperation with Britain, Canada, Australia, and perhaps even with New Zealand, under the auspices of the ABCA fora.
- This is not to say that there will emerge a new solidified alliance bloc between the United States and its four Anglo-Saxon brethren. Differing geographic threat orientations and likely powerful domestic pressures in all five countries to reduce defense budgets will obviate this eventuality. Moreover, there are few political and security rationales which would compel establishing such an organization. Nonetheless, one can foresee a basis for continued defense cooperation within the ABCA fora and to possibly include new areas of activity. For example, if NATO atrophies in certain defense cooperative programs like standardization as a result of the diminished Soviet threat, strong consideration should be given to establishing comparable new programs under ABCA auspices.
- Given the rapid change in international relations, it can be safely assumed that in the future, allies will be, so to speak, at a premium. Therefore, in following the February 1990 lead of Secretary of State James Baker to reestablish high level diplomatic contacts with New Zealand⁷² and the subsequent acceptance of the antinuclear platform by the conservative National Party⁷³ (thereby effectively destroying any chance of Wellington's formal return to ANZUS), the reestablishment of formalized, but less-than-allied

security relations with New Zealand should be undertaken. Despite widespread antinuclear sentiments in New Zealand, that country continues to share pro-Western diplomatic interests with its Anglo-Saxon allies, which should be supported in the defense area. One possibility would be for the New Zealand Defence Forces to reestablish contacts with their U.S. counterparts through the sponsorship of the Australian Defence Force and within the institutional auspices of an expanded ABCA fora. While exercises by U.S. Forces in New Zealand would be prescribed by the country's antinuclear legislation, cooperative activities in Australia and the United States would enable the small, but highly professional New Zealand Defence Forces to gain valuable expertise, while encouraging a greater commitment to defense by Wellington. This solution would encourage the Australian and New Zealand defense forces to maintain, if not strengthen close bilateral security ties, while relieving the current undue burden on Australia of having to maintain two separate sets of allied security relations.

- There will be a surfeit of useable military equipment following the conclusion of a CFE accord, which will have to be disposed with in any case. The selective reequipment by the United States of its ABCA allies would serve Washington's interests to encourage the maintenance of military capabilities by its allies at a time when defense spending in these countries will be under severe political pressure to contract.
- The ABCA fora, regrettably, will not be a panacea for U.S. diplomatic and defense officials as they attempt to realign U.S. diplomacy and strategy to meet the assuredly diplomatically competitive post-cold war world. Nevertheless, as new solutions to these problems are being considered, defense officials in particular should not ignore the longstanding and intimate defense ties which already exist between the

United States and these four English-speaking democracies. While it can be expected that there will continue to be disagreements between the United States and these four countries relative to regional threat perceptions and what the United States perceives as inadequate defense spending by Canada and New Zealand, a commonality in shared basic diplomatic and security objectives will remain in fundamental areas, and thereby provide the requisite basis for continued, if not expanded, defense cooperation.

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<p>This report analyzes the little-known, but extensive defense cooperative relationship which exists among the armed forces of the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. While perhaps amply established as of 1989, given the recent changes which have taken place in the Soviet Union, U.S. alliance strategy is now on the verge of a new era in which the Soviet threat is seen by many U.S. policymakers. As U.S. officials ponder the implications of a</p>			

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20. decreased Soviet threat on its major alliances, of which almost all have been threat-based, it will be important to recall the one series of collective security arrangements with allies which has been founded on similarities, vice solely threat. This intimate Anglo-Saxon connection appears to have the needed bases for enduring well into the post-coldwar era.

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